

Agricultural Journal

AND

TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

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"Knowledge is power," we are constantly told, and we believe it, but for agriculturists there is some instruction more necessary than what is understood by those who assert that knowledge is power. The knowledge taught in schools may be power so far as it goes, but it will not give the power that would be most useful to enable a farmer to cultivate and manage his farm in the best manner and to the greatest advantage. Useful knowledge is what agriculturists require, and this should include all the knowledge that would be necessary to make a farmer complete master of his profession, as well as fit him for acting in any capacity or situation which the Government or the country might call upon him to fill. This is the education that would be power to the farmer, and the education to which he is entitled when taxed to pay for it. What, we would beg to submit, would be the value to this country of a dozen young men coming from school, well educated, and also practically instructed in the science and art of agriculture, settling in the country upon farms, to be an example to all around them, compared with a dozen young men educated for what are termed, the "Learned Professions," on leaving school, and settling in cities, towns or villages, as doctors, advocates, notaries or politicians? We shall not reply to this question, but leave it for the consideration of others. If knowledge gives power, the agricultural class are entitled to have that sort of knowledge that will give them power to act for the most advantage for themselves and for the whole community. The education fitting for a merchant, a doctor or an advocate, is

not all that is necessary for a farmer, or at least is not, alone, the most suitable for him. We cannot expect, under present circumstances, that our youth would be able to obtain at school all the instruction necessary to make them good farmers, because we have not at present school masters capable of imparting this instruction, nor model-farms where they could see the practical work of agriculture in operation. It is in our power, however, to introduce in all country schools suitable books on the science and practice of agriculture, for the reading of the sons of farmers, and thus lead them to think of the profession they are to be engaged in for life. The great objection to the present system is, that the whole tendency of the education of the children of the rural population is to fit them for any business rather than farming. Examine their school books, and all the stories that are to be found in these books, of persons who have gained renown, wealth or respectability, refer to every business and profession but that of agriculture. This reading induces the youthful mind to prefer that business or profession where there is a chance of gaining wealth and a higher station than he conceives it would be possible for him to arrive at on his father's farm. He never reads of any farmer becoming a renowned general, admiral or statesman, or of gaining such great wealth as merchants or manufacturers, or such high station as professional men often attain to. All these are tempting objects to strive for, and he therefore despises the profession of a farmer, that does not offer him the same chances in the race of life. Farmers, or those engaged in husbandry, seldom become book-makers, and this is one cause, that so little is found in school-books in commendation of agricultural pursuits, or having any reference to husbandry. It is a strange inconsistency that this should be the case, considering that agriculture is the first and most useful profession on earth, and actually necessary to man's existence. While this system continues, farmers have no fair chance of suc-